

The 934th meeting of the Club was held on Tuesday 6 December 2005, in the Sherfield Building Annexe, Imperial College, London. Twenty-two members and seven guests were present.

Members attending were: Cdr. M. B. Casement, RN (*Chairman*), Miss H. Baker, Ms D. V. Breese, D. R. Calder, Ms K. Cook, Dr J. H. Cooper, D. J. Fisher, F. M. Gauntlett, D. Griffin, Dr J. P. Hume (*Speaker*), R. H. Kettle, R. R. Langley, D. J. Montier, Mrs M. N. Muller, P. J. Oliver, A. J. Pittman, Dr R. P. Prŷs-Jones, N. J. Redman, P. J. Sellar, S. A. H. Statham, C. W. R. Storey and P. J. Wilkinson.

Guests attending were: Mrs J. Calder, Mrs C. R. Casement, A. Cheke, Mrs M. H. Gauntlett, Mrs M. Montier, C. Muller and Dr L. Steel.

After dinner, Dr Julian Hume presented an informative discussion on *The parrots of the Mascarenes*. The Psittaciformes are a distinct order of birds that have evolved adaptations (e.g. large jaws/ zygodactyl foot) for feeding, climbing etc. Parrots have been popular both as food items and as pets, and primarily because of this, a number of species have become extinct or are critically endangered. Many species have colonised remote oceanic islands and island groups, and in some cases speciated to such a degree that their affinities are now difficult to determine. The volcanic and isolated Mascarenes, comprising Réunion, Mauritius and Rodrigues, are situated in the south-west Indian Ocean. As a consequence of numerous sea-level changes, parrot colonists were able to island hop to the Mascarenes within the last 5–7 million years, with south-east Asia almost certainly the founding source. It can also be determined that at least 3–4 parrot colonising events have taken place, with the first species arriving on Mauritius and Rodrigues very early in the islands' history. The second and third events populated all three islands, whilst a possible fourth occurred in the last 1.5 million years and populated only Mauritius and Réunion. Due to evidence derived from contemporary accounts, contemporary illustrations, the fossil record and preserved specimens, the Mascarene parrots appear to be derived from the Psittaculini group of parrots that radiated through south-east Asia and into northern Australia. The number of endemic species is high with Mauritius harbouring three sympatric species, Réunion possibly four and Rodrigues two. Three monotypic genera are present, whilst the genus *Psittacula* comprises the remaining species. All Mascarene species were generally shorter in the wing, longer in the leg and had proportionately larger, wider jaws than psittaculine counterparts found on the mainland. Due primarily to man's interference, all Mascarene parrots are now extinct bar the Echo Parakeet *Psittacula echo* of Mauritius. This species, although numbering fewer than a dozen individuals in the 1980s, has now recovered to over 300 individuals due to the conservation efforts of the Mauritius Wildlife Foundation.

The name *Cyanocorax mystacalis*

In the last issue of the Bulletin I demonstrated that the author of the name *Astur kienerii* was the Comte de Sparre. I am indebted to Michael Walters for suggesting that I add that *Pica mystacalis* (also named in Fig. 1, on p.317) was also associated with the initials 'G.S.' and that the correction in authorship should probably be extended to this name too. I have consulted the Table Méthodique for 1831–38 again to be sure, and find that whilst *Astur kienerii* on p.2 was attributed to 'G. de Sparre' the name *Pica mystacalis* on p.5 was attributed to 'G. Sparre'. Knowing that the full name was de Sparre, it is therefore correct that the name *Cyanocorax mystacalis* (Geoffroy St. Hilaire, 1835), as used in Peters's Check-list and in all other modern works, be corrected to *Cyanocorax mystacalis* (de Sparre, 1835).

Edward C. Dickinson